

same can be said of the questions which the compiler is asked to record of his father, such as : his school reports and his reports of the school ; caps and colours ; prizes and punishments ; his most usual anecdotes ; the experiences that have affected him most ; the character he most resembles in fiction ; his reflections on the Government, foreigners, modern art, divorce ; my first recollections of him ; when I think of him, what do I hear him say ; other people's recollections of him. The compiler is asked to fill in particulars for himself. Among them are the following : first memories ; educated ; learnt ; honours and prizes ; my reverses ; the career I proposed for myself ; my career, occupation, or hobby ; people that have influenced me in my youth ; my religious beliefs and their evolution ; tastes and interests ; prejudices ; types of snobbishness—Blood-snob, Position-snob, Money - snob, Intellectual - snob, Majority- or Minority-snob ; family characteristics I would wish to pass on ; family characteristics I would wish to obliterate.

Interspersed throughout the book are well-chosen quotations from various authors, some of them strikingly appropriate. Gummed to the inside of the back page of the cover is an unsealed envelope marked " The family secret." The book has been beautifully produced by the Nonesuch Press on very attractive paper, and at the price, is very cheap. Madame Jacquier is to be congratulated upon an original and well-executed project.

C. P. BLACKER.

SOCIOLOGY

Himes, Norman E. (editor). *Economics, Sociology and the Modern World*. London, 1935. Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press. Pp. xii + 327. Price 21s.

THIS is a volume of eighteen essays published in his honour by former students of Professor T. N. Carver, who retired in 1932 from the chair of political economy at Harvard. The subjects they cover fall into three categories,

agricultural economics, economic theory and history, and sociology, and in the third there are two essays of special interest to eugenicists. Writing on the causes of the declining birth-rate, Dr. Norman Himes summarizes in lucid fashion the quantitative data on the practice of contraception as the effective means of reducing fertility. His scrutiny of recent clinical and other evidence confirms, with the weight of his unique authority, the conclusion that it is the wide diffusion of contraceptive knowledge rather than any change in natural fecundity which is the chief immediate cause of " the Vital Revolution." Though other factors, especially economic ones, have certainly been at work, contraception is the catalytic agent which made them peculiarly effective.

The economic effects likely to flow from stationary or declining population are considered by Mr. A. B. Wolfe. He believes that the awkward changes in the supply of labour and in the demand for consumption goods could be met by well-planned adjustments designed to keep industrial activity at a high level. But he admits that unless the corporate interests adversely affected overcome their own fears, the outlook is not bright.

One other essay deserves mention because it is of interest to everyone who detests dogma in the social sciences. Mr. Wilfrid H. Crook illustrates the absurdity of " cultural compulsives " from the work of various people, happily including Marxian fatalists. Those who have followed the controversy between Westermarck and Briffault, aided and abetted by Calverton, in relation to marriage will regret that this essay is so short and its points so tersely made. One would gladly have given Mr. Crook the space occupied by some others whose horizons are obviously limited, but no doubt the editor of a *festschrift* with so wide a range to cover had trials enough in his task of producing it.

JOHN GILD.

Ellis, Havelock. *Questions of our Day*. London, 1936. John Lane. Pp. 313. Price 8s. 6d.

IN this his latest book Havelock Ellis has adopted the same method as that which he

used so effectively in its predecessor, *My Confessional*.* From his voluminous correspondence he selects a letter in which the writer sets forth certain opinions on some subject of general interest or perhaps makes a statement or raises some question of a controversial nature. From this letter our author selects a representative paragraph, and, taking this as a text, develops the potentialities of its matter into a short essay. It is an admirable method, particularly for an author like Havelock Ellis, who, having worked a specialized subject to a finish, can now spend the autumn of his life in contemplating with a serene, lively and sympathetic interest the changing world around him and the men and women who are at once the producers and the products of its changes. For each correspondent has some point of view to present, and Havelock Ellis is interested in them all.

The essays are short, as they must needs be, for there are exactly a hundred of them, and they are nearly uniform in length. Each occupies from two to three pages and contains on an average a thousand words; about the length of a rather short newspaper article. Obviously it is impossible even to enumerate them, but their character is fairly set forth by the title of the book. They discuss and comment on the various questions with which the men and women of the present generation are specially concerned. And the choice of subjects is admirable and shows a remarkable degree of originality and imagination. It is no small achievement to produce a collection of a hundred short essays of which there is not one which will not be read with deep interest and pleasure, to say nothing of intellectual profit, by any thoughtful and cultivated person.

As to the technical quality of these essays, it is hardly necessary to say that in manner of presentation, in style and literary workmanship, they are beyond criticism. They are representative examples of the work of a master of sound and elegant English, and they are characterized by the directness of

expression, the lucidity and felicity of phrase and the avoidance of affected mannerisms which make Havelock Ellis's writing a model for those who use speech as an instrument for conveying thought and not for merely decorative purposes. And the matter is as excellent as the manner. In each of these little masterpieces the influence is felt of the author's encyclopædic knowledge, his wide and deep scholarship and his universal interest and curiosity concerning every form of human activity, thought and emotion. But it is not only the author's knowledge and erudition that give weight to the comments and pronouncements in these essays. In all of them the reader is conscious of a remarkable personality; of a mind that is at once acute and penetrating, but always calm, judicial and temperate; that thinks not only with balanced wisdom but also with unflinching charity and kindness.

If there is any point on which the present reviewer is disposed to cavil, it is in regard to the uniform length of the essays. The subjects are of varying interest and importance, but some of them seem to deserve more than the quota of a thousand words which is allotted to them. The result of the condensation is a tendency to inconclusiveness. An issue of profound interest is raised but there is not space enough to dispose of it effectually. One feels it to be a little tantalizing that a thinker of Havelock Ellis's power and knowledge, having raised an issue of deep significance, should be compelled by mere deficiency of space to let it go without reaching any definite conclusion. A couple of instances may be given in which I think the reader would have been glad if the author had allowed himself some further space to pursue the subject to greater completeness.

One of these is Number 34, "What is Art?" Here is a Question of our Day which is in urgent need of a clear answer. Now that our public buildings are being "adorned" with sculptures which are frank imitations of the work of primitives and savages, and that there are being shown in our great galleries pictures which are totally deficient in the traditional qualities of pictorial art,

* EUGENICS REVIEW, 1935, xxvii, 159.

we want to know what these things portend. Are there new discoveries in art, or is there simply a failure of taste and achievement? Some aid to judgment is needed. The picturesque epigrams of artists, poets and philosophers are too nebulous in meaning to serve as a basis for criticism. Havelock Ellis, it is true, rejects the "fine arts" as distinctively "art"; and he holds that "art is really too large for any final definition." Still, even in the more restricted sense, there are truths of art which are open to investigation and which lie well with the province of a writer who can combine the outlooks of the artist and the scientist.

The second instance which occurs to me is Number 3, "Are the Working Class Manual Workers?" This raises a question which, so far as I know, has never received serious consideration: the intellectual content of skilled manual work. It has, I think, usually been grossly underestimated excepting by a few writers like the late Professor Lethaby, who was himself a skilled worker, and who liked to dwell on the "wisdoms" of the old craftsmen—their knowledge and ingenuity as well as their skill. In the present essay the author is careful to point out how much of the achievement in modern industry belongs to the appliance, but in his comparison of the new with the old he merely contrasts the navvy of the past with the skilled worker of the present. A longer essay would have given him room to contrast the really intellectual workers of the past, men like Harrison, Graham and Earnshaw, with their modern counterparts.

But, after all, it is unreasonable to criticize a book for not being what its author never intended it to be. The essays in this collection are put forward as brief, informal comments on questions of contemporary interest; and as such they could not be better. Each is as full of matter as is possible in the space, and the matter is always original, illuminating, stimulating and provocative of thought. If in some cases the issue seems to be still left open, that very circumstance encourages the reader to continue the debate in his own mind. He has got a suggestive start and the

material for further cogitation; and if he pursues the subject of one essay by the light of some of the others he will probably be carrying out the intentions of the author. And in any case the book can be warmly recommended to all who are interested—as, surely, everyone is—in the Questions of our Day and who enjoy shrewd and wise comments on them expressed in lively and scholarly English.

R. AUSTIN FREEMAN.

CONTRACEPTION

Haire, Norman, Ch.M., M.B. *Birth-Control Methods.* London, 1936. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Pp. 196. Price 6s.

Himes, Norman E., Ph.D. *Medical History of Contraception.* London, 1936. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. Pp. xxxi+521. Price 25s.

MR. HAIRE set out on his journey some fifteen years ago. He has at last caught the bus; but it is now crowded, and he seems a little bewildered at some of the company in which he finds himself. How little he envies the established occupants may be inferred from the fact that he marks his arrival by distributing a number of bouquets—though with a lack of discrimination that does more credit to his heart than his head. Anyone who wishes to learn why Mr. Haire has for so long enjoyed the distinction, almost unique among authorities on birth-control, of not having contributed a full-length volume to the literature of the subject, may discover the reasons in the interesting (and in places, let it be added, moving) introductory chapter of this book; but though by his self-denial Mr. Haire has failed to rank with the first 100,000 (or thereabouts) he has undoubtedly produced a better and more informative work than he could have written when contraceptive methods were less standardized and his own experience was less mellow.

It should not be assumed that the passengers of whom Mr. Haire now has a straphanger's eye view form a happy family